



May 5, 2021

Senate Elections Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Michigan is concerned about the bills that are being considered by the committee today and their potential adverse impact on Michigan citizens' right to vote.

1. SB 273 (Johnson) that regulates the placement of absentee ballot boxes is dangerous to the future of absentee voter ballot drop boxes throughout Michigan. The requirement that the location of boxes must be approved by the County Board of Canvassers, who are unelected and unaccountable officials, is unacceptable. Also, many other provisions in the bill for the protection of absentee ballots are extremely costly and unnecessary. What problem is this bill trying to address with this cumbersome and costly process?
2. SB 278 (MacDonald) that regulates how absentee ballots are collected and transported places an undue burden on local clerks throughout the state. Why are these regulations necessary?
3. SB 286 (McBroom) that ends the use of absentee voter ballot drop boxes at 5 p.m. before the day of the election makes it more difficult for citizens to return their ballots on Election Day. We should be increasing voter participation by making voting more convenient, not less. Absentee voter ballot drop boxes should be available through Election Day.
4. SB 308 (Johnson) that provides for the military to electronic return of absentee ballots using the Department of Defense Common Access Cards should be improved to provide the same opportunities for military spouses and dependents living abroad. We urge you to include all military spouses and dependents voting abroad so they have the opportunity to return their ballot electronically through email, fax or a secure website, not only through the Department of Defense Common Access Cards.
5. SB 334 (Johnson) that provides for the same amount of pre-processing of absentee ballots the day before the election as was in place for the November 2020 election. We urge you to increase the time allowed for preprocessing and to consider when absentee ballots can be processed. Seventeen states allow for counting before election day.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our testimony. We will continue to work to assure every citizen has a right to vote and that the process is fair and secure.

Christina Schlitt
President